

Wherever irresponsibility or rebellion, frequently referred to as "the crime wave," has threatened or interrupted the peace of a community, invariably it has been traceable to the shirking of duty by many elements in that community. Religious leadership may charge it to public apathy; citizens generally may blame the political leadership; police will cite a condition of general lawlessness chargeable to abdication of parental authority, or general cussedness of particular groups in the population; the press will point to inefficiency in the police force. Full circles of charge and counter-charge will have been drawn; all may be right in terms of identifying some of the important factors in the decline of a community pride; but all are wrong in pursuing efforts to fix blame elsewhere than within their own realms of responsibility and competence.

Each is wrong, too, in criticising others in the community, on the basis of their own unrealistic levels of expectation of others. The clergy may expect much higher levels of civic participation from the general public; the public always expects and demands higher performance from political leaders than its own apathy can justify; the press, forever seeks news of deviations from perfection, the sensational, the unfavorable side of socio-political developments and of police performances; and all seem to expect highly motivated, middle class urban-oriented performance from that part of the public at least exposed to these values, to which are attached the more disturbing statistics of arrests, violations and convictions. This segment of the population, whose needs, experiences, fears and desires are of least importance to the whole community, turn their frustrations and dissatisfactions upon the police who, to them are the highly visible representatives of an invisible and hostile society.

Two eminent Americans have commented upon unrealistic levels of expectations generally though unconsciously accepted in our nation. Just a year ago at the 5th Annual Texas A & M Police and Community Relations Institute, Chief Bernard Garrido of the Tucson (Ariz.) Police Department, said of public expectations

of police: ^{1/}

" a police officer must have the mind of a lawyer-
the soul of a clergyman - the heart of a social worker-
the discipline of a Marine Sergeant - the integrity of
a Saint. He must believe in a community of law, while
seeing little but lawlessness; believe in the goodness
of man, while seeing man most often at his worst - work
in a community of men who resent his presence but depend
on his faithfulness - know his city like a sociologist,
and he must understand people like a psychologist - take
the long view of life like a philosopher, and yet never
lose his common touch."

The noted author John Steinbeck was quoted in the Saturday Review a few
years ago, in a comment upon the Negro segment of our population. Under the
title "The Black Man's Ironic Burden", Mr. Steinbeck also listed a great number
of high expectations imposed by society upon this group; ^{2/} I quote just a few:

"We expect Negroes to be wiser than we are, more tolerant
than we are, braver, more dignified, more self-controlled
and self-disciplined; they must be 10 times as gifted to

1/ Proceedings of the 5th Annual Texas A & M Police and Community Relations
Institute. August 1962.

2/ Saturday Review (April 1961)

receive equal recognition; have more endurance than we in athletics, more courage in defeat, more rhythm and versatility in music and dancing, more controlled emotion in theater. We expect them to obey rules of conduct we flout, to be more courteous, more gallant, more proud, more steadfast."

You who are Police, and I, happen to be members of these two highly visible "minority" groups. Each of us has developed a high degree of sensitivity to and rejection of these unrealistic levels of expectation, of which we have been made victims. Nevertheless, each of us, by our own hypercritical assessment of the other in most test areas, unconsciously express the expectations we demand of the other - whether or not we really expect high level performance. As a result of this mutually critical attitude, each is much more easily irritated by the lapses of the other; our impatience shows more easily; we voice our dissatisfactions more readily; and we can engage in recrimination and conflict on slight provocation. Just like cousins, if you'll forgive the expression. Meantime, the rest of the family, which is the community around us, urges us on in our personal disagreements with a "Let's you and him fight." kind of encouragement.

At this point I should like to bring this discussion down to the level of the specific problem of Police and Minority segments of the American community - not to plead a cause on the racial front, as such, - but that I may be in a position to relate particular examples and examine particular problems in a concrete form, as distinct from discussing some of these issues in the abstract. I think this is a legitimate approach if my earlier references to justice and to law and order are considered to be valid. It just happens that I have been a Negro longer than anything else, so my experiences have been more varied in this area. I believe

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there would be the same degree of validity to this approach if we were to use the example of Indians in reservation country, Spanish speaking people here in the Southwest or the eastern seaboard, or other highly visible minorities in other parts of the country. This is so because it is in the living experiences of these peoples of high visibility that we find the more pronounced examples of dislocation, of separation, of deprivation or lack of belongingness. It is here that unemployment is highest and where under-employment reduces annual income to 50% or less of that of the so-called majority group worker; it is here that housing discrimination is greatest, and the otherwise routine task of finding decent shelter for a family becomes a maddening experience. It is here that things most of us take for granted - availability of reasonably good schools for our children, of ordinary recreational facilities, of convenient stations in which to secure food, drink and shelter - are withheld for no other reason than one's racial or ethnic identification. And, it is in such groups that we find reflected the highest rates of arrest in any metropolitan center in America. (2)

In your community, and mine, unless it is a very exceptional community with respect to the meeting of responsibility on its many levels, we presently are concerned about delinquency and crime rates. The more you and the press and the political leaders and the clergy pass the buck around the circle, the more directly implicated minority group elements in the community become. The characteristic defensiveness of those of minority group status becomes accentuated; the nature of contact between them and the Police, individually and collectively, creates more sensitivity and more defensiveness, and again we have completely rounded out the vicious cycle of charge and counter-charge, of action and reaction. (2)

The minority community, with its serious social, economic and political disadvantages, is confronted by uniformed symbols of society - a society that has

reduced the minority to its level of dissatisfaction. This uniformed symbol, the Police, possesses a power and an authority that historically are interpreted as having been used against rather than for the group's interest. Mere mention of the names of Birmingham, Jackson, Selma evokes memories for any Negro today - memories that may not be erased by the wave of a magic wand. It is not necessary for this power to be misused regularly or constantly, to have reinforced the suspicion and fear that memory of other times and other places has created. Only one unfortunate incident will supply this reinforcement; that is - if there is no positive, constructive effort being given toward the building of confidence to offset the suspicion that prevails.

Repeatedly we see enacted the drama growing out of natural conflict to be found in this confrontation. At the core of each conflict situation is the human tendency to equate "my rights" with "his responsibilities". A rational approach is that of consideration of "our respective rights", then on to the natural next step of "our respective responsibilities" toward achieving these rights. Constructive implementation of a sense of our respective responsibilities is that which develops the concept of "community", involving as it must, the interdependence of all for the common good. Essential to this development is mutual respect for the rights of others, assured only where there is healthy communication.

In contrast to this foregoing example, I know a number of Police departments in different parts of the country which have begun to recognize Human Relations to be as important an area of study for their personnel as are the more technical aspects of police work. (Denver - the newest of these - Division Chief in charge). Among these, too, are the departments which have employed specialists in human relations under whose leadership a closer communion with citizens of the community may be developed. (Like Chicago). That these departments stand out as the exception rather than the rule, throughout America, indicates

that still there are those in Police work who look upon this kind of emphasis as a lot of "do-gooder" hogwash, firmly believing that police should be exposed only to sterner stuff. Not long ago, two highly qualified social scientists and I were engaged by a large municipal Police department to conduct a series of lectures on human relations, in a long-deferred in-service refresher course for all personnel. Sessions were chaired by a Deputy Chief of Police who was approaching retirement age. At the close of each session, when the three specialists had given their very best accumulation of knowledge on the subject, the Deputy Chief closed the session with his own interpretations, all of which served to deny, refute, dispose of every valid bit of information presented by the specialists; his premise being that the practical experience he had acquired in years of police work gave him the best knowledge of human relations problems - at least as much as Police are required to know. (4)

In the case of the increasing number of Departments that are working constructively in developing human relations understandings, there is evidence of a desire to learn from authoritative sources, in order that through the understanding that may be acquired, they may cope more effectively with the complex problems of tension in today's metropolitan areas. These efforts too, are resulting in the training of an impressive number of police who themselves are providing competent human relations skills to Department training and administrative operations. But - there are also those Police who insist upon judging the phenomena of this trying period with a singular harsh standard of values which conveniently ignores the abnormal conditions out of which problems have sprung, and with equal harshness seek to abandon to oblivion those human beings who spiritually and physically have succumbed to the forces which have caused them to be out of step with society. In which of these reactions is to be found evidence of the greater, the more realistic, sense of responsibility? (1)

I had indicated earlier that my preoccupation in this paper with so-called minority groups, is due to the high incidence of anti-social behavior in minority group ghettos, as disclosed by statistics on delinquency and crime, and as seen in the day-to-day experience of police officers. What of these minority groups? Where do they stand with respect to recognizing and accepting a sense of responsibility? (1)

In scores of Police-Community relations conferences which I have been privileged to attend over the past fifteen or more years, one of the inevitable questions has been "Well, what is the Negro doing to improve himself?". The question serves first of all to disclose the grave need for communication between Police and the Negro minority, in some other relationship than that of arresting officer and Negro violator or suspect. Certainly the question is an implied confession of ignorance of what is transpiring behind the ghetto walls; and it implies also that minority group leadership is possessed of some magic quality to sooth its angry people, heal deep psychological wounds, provide sustenance and inspiration for its marginal rebels, preach away dissatisfaction no matter how deep-seated - - - something that society has been unable to do for the whole population even when it possesses the necessary tools, facilities and means for aiding the healing process. Last I appear to you to be defensive in answering my own question, I wish to assert that the more fortunate members of any society bear great responsibility for aiding the less fortunate members of that society, and this applies to minorities as well as to the community generally. But this assertion still does not answer the question. What then is the responsibility of Negro leadership - that amorphous segment of a mysterious world that exists apart from everything we know? Is it to aid the group become more economically independent and self-sustaining? But, they don't own nor control the factories, banks and commercial establishments, nor direct the policies of labor unions. (1a)

Even if a racially separated economy were possible or desirable, they have not the means of employing all workers, building their own housing, supplying their own needs. Is it their responsibility to see that more of the group secure education adequate enough for competitive purposes? But they do not own the schools and academies and colleges, nor have they even been able to gain admission to such institutions in parts of the country where the group need is greatest. Perhaps they can work for development of higher standards of group morality and social behavior? This question intrigues many whose acquaintance with minority group life is limited to sensational articles, or as with the Police, to contact only with the lower socio-economic levels in conflict situations. My interest was caught by a comment by Dr. L. B. Savits of Temple University in an article "Factors Influencing Crime Rates of Negroes," ^{2/} as follows:

"Even assuming that every arrest in a given year involves a different person, and that every arrest results in conviction, it is clear that well over 90% of the Negro population are law-abiding citizens. Since these assumptions are unwarranted (that is, every arrest does not involve different persons and every arrest does not lead to conviction), the estimate of 90% is decidedly conservative."

The logic of this statement does not pretend to ignore the disproportionate rate of Negro involvement with Police, but it does serve to attack the

^{2/} A study for the Commission on Human Relations, Philadelphia; December 1962 - Page 2

validity of existing stereotypes that would place the Negro group as a whole (or the Mexican or the Puerto Rican or the Indian) in the criminal class. Nevertheless, in 65 Urban League local offices and in hundreds of NAACP branches, youth group activities are being promoted, toward the difficult task of lifting the sights of Negro youth above the sordid, mean, unpromising horizon which greets their eyes from the limits of the racial ghetto and its de-facto segregated school. Through various other community activities, the League is reaching the reachable with programs designed to accelerate the adjustment to independent city life of so many Negroes who have come out of a feudal, rural society in recent years. Negro churches are struggling as churches in all groups and denominations must struggle, to hold attention and do constructive work; fraternities and sororities are making their contributions through scholarships and other aids, however limited and unsatisfactory. Those who are doing these humble tasks, under difficult circumstances and against a rising tide of youthful cynicism, themselves must fight against terrific odds in order to retain their own faith.

A Television program a couple of years ago brought this out very sharply. A public affairs discussion program presented the late Malcolm X, youthful and fiery spokesman for the Black Muslims, in an exchange of views with a well-educated Brooklyn Negro clergyman. On the panel were two white men and a Negro PhD, former college professor and high New York State official. Malcolm X, in his usual emotional tirade, repeated and re-emphasized the endless story of white exploitation of black people, particularly in America. According to Malcolm X, there is no meeting ground between the races, nothing in common, no hope for cooperation and peace. The two University trained Negroes sharing the program were in violent disagreement with the Muslim philosophy, expectations and conclusions; yet in analysing what was being said throughout the hour-long program, one was brought to a realization that neither of the college-trained, conciliatory,

"reasonable" men was able to deny the truth of Malcolm X's assertions, refute his recitation of wrongs or offer any concrete promise of change. The one single thing which separated them in their views and conclusions was the word "Hope." Malcolm and his sect have lost theirs; the others still retain theirs - - the experiences, study, faith of all three Negroes had undergone the same traumatic assault upon their own lives. Each has known during his entire lifetime the effect of deprivation of simple human dignity, whether by thoughtless act or studied deed; each is required to walk in that shadowy world in which move those who are less than men. (Three personal incidents: Athens, Istanbul and Wilmington).

But, I repeat - what then is the responsibility of Negro leadership? In the days of the slave regime, the Negro clergyman who preached his other-world doctrine of passive endurance here for assurance of reward hereafter, did what he thought was good. But this in no way contributed to the elimination of slavery; it helped only to make it more endurable. The unceasing work of abolitionists, of dedicated people of deep religious conviction and of people who truly believed in the dignity of the human personality, by their joint efforts made it feasible for President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation just over a century ago. Then, the fight was the one important task of eliminating the blot of human slavery from the Western world.

Over fifty years ago, two different organizations were formed in the Negro world by the joining of hands of dedicated white people and colored people, for separate attacks upon injustices. The National Urban League came into being for the purpose of improving the employment opportunities; housing, health and recreational facilities; and privileges of full citizenship for Negroes coming into urban centers. Theirs was the elected role of providing calm, dispassionate, persuasive spokesmanship for the Negro race in America, as their way of gaining

recognition and opportunity. For over fifty years, this organization has struggled along with seriously restricted budgets, with painfully inadequate staff, with polite but contemptuous disregard by the majority community, for the human problems embraced in League program proposals. I know, because I spent sixteen years of my life in the discouraging, disheartening effort to gain the sympathetic ear and the cooperation of businessmen, labor leaders, clergy, educators, police and the whole range of officials, great and small, who represented the outreach of the power-structure of the community. It is extremely difficult to keep Hope alive, when encountering this kind of experience. It is even more difficult for those whose lives are confined physically and spiritually to the lonely, unpromising, sordid limits of the ghetto.

Over fifty years ago, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People came into being, for the purpose of employing the tools fashioned by the architect of this great country, as means of forever protecting Americans from the tyranny to which their forebears had been exposed. Unique in the history of mankind, this organization has ceaselessly waged a war for human liberty without ever resorting to violence; always expressing hope in the rightness of man-made law and its ability, concretely and objectively, to resolve problems associated with the tyranny of racism. Where else in the world has there been this kind of consistent, tireless but intelligently restrained expression of impatience and hope, manifested by a people who historically, here in the Western world, have been classed with the beasts of the field.

For over fifty years, these two organizations through their leadership, have had the task of trying to hold the faith and respect of their followers, while pounding upon the doors of the conscience of America; and for this period of time, they have had to live with the futility of it all as they watched the tiny, grudging concessions made in response to their pleadings. I know, because

more than forty years ago I became an ardent member of the NAACP which fought for years for passage of a civil rights law in my native state, Michigan, in my native city, Lansing, where I was not permitted to enter the ground floor of a movie picture theatre, or buy a sandwich in a restaurant. I knew, because then and since, I have had the soul-searching task of trying to earn and to receive the respect, the sympathetic hearing, the cooperative action from public officials, from police, from employers that a spokesman for a disadvantaged group should have, in a free and just society.

Today, we are living increasingly with immediate by-products of the indifference, opposition and contempt with which the efforts of these two organizations have been greeted. Many Negroes, whose anger has reached an irreconcilable level, find the Black Muslim movement to be a satisfying vehicle for their spirit of revolt; many others, without guidance, discipline or restraint, strike out blindly against any symbol of society. They who still retain some modicum of hope, despite discouragement and disillusionment, are stepping up the pace and volume of protest action. Here again, if we will but analyse that which is happening, these demonstrations are unique and highly significant of the role being played by Negro leadership in its attempt to meet its responsibility.

In all parts of the world, the vanguard of protest movements fighting for human betterment has been composed largely of university youth groups. In America, for whatever combination of reasons, this is rarely true. Identification with social, economic and political issues of the day has been limited largely to organized forum discussions, with social action being almost non-existent. Youthful spirits have been content with "high jinks" expressions such as party-raids, phone booth pile-ups, and other such mentally elevating exercises. The college youth from whom the least was expected, who had the most to lose and the least hope of gain, are they who have given the world inspiring demonstrations of

purpose, self-discipline, love of fellowman and faith in the ultimate triumph of decency. Negro youth who have never known the real meaning of Freedom or the inner meaning of a sense of human dignity, have been the ones who have given demonstration of the heights human dignity can attain, even in the face of unbelievable provocation to cause loss of dignity. A profound sense of responsibility, manifested by minority group leadership, has made these demonstrations possible. As I utter this thought, my mind is brought back to a statement made by Dr. Franklin Littell of Chicago Theological Seminary in a speech delivered at the 1963 Conference on Religion and Race.^{1/} Said Dr. Littell:

"What would our situation be in America today, facing our most important internal crisis, if the Negro leadership were at the level of Ross Barnett, Orville Faubus, Jimmy Davis and Edwin Walker?"

I could have countered with reference to Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, and perhaps a couple more, but thank God neither of these has been in position, as have the others, to determine the course of the entire machinery of law enforcement or operation of a complete educational system - nor have they been so effective as to sway the emotions of so many persons in so many strategic places; - - - at least, not yet!

World events are placing greater responsibilities upon the shoulders of the many levels of minority group leadership, particularly the Negro. The grievances with which he must deal are part of the ferment of a world which has been taught to revolt in violence. Yet, his choice is and has been the

^{1/} From speech delivered at Chicago Conference on Religion and Race as reported in the Interracial Review. Editorial Page. April 1963

alternative of relying upon a system of law which in national perspective is idealistic in the abstract, but which on the local, operational plane frequently is coarse, biased and arbitrary when reflecting the character of administrators of such caliber. His patience is tried, not only by the insistent pleas and demands of the group he would lead, and by the constant assaults by the outside world upon the dignity of his own personality, but also by the calloused or thoughtless admonitions of well-meaning majority group persons who, without patience of their own, counsel patience to him who has been the epitome of forbearance and patience.

In our chronic pre-occupation with each other, as the "aggressor" group, we, the Police and the Negro (again serving as symbol and example of minority status and aspirations) may feel that neither of us is in position fully and perceptibly to change community positions or attitudes. In time and with consistent effort we may influence and mold these attitudes, but this is not done by wishing. Neither of us had much voice in the making of the rules, but both of us can help reshape them, if reshaping is called for. Chief Herbert Jenkins of Atlanta, Georgia, several months before Atlanta took formal steps to integrate its schools, stated then what he expected of his police force, and of the community, if confronted by this or any similar issue. He had thought and planned and trained his men for such eventuality, and when the test came, he carried his community with him in meeting the test. Whatever may have been the mores of the community - its fears and traditions - they yielded to the influence of a government and its police force, both of which truly believed in their roles of preserving law and order, and implemented this belief by being prepared to restrain those who would be perpetrators of disorder. In Dallas and Houston, I understand that similar evidence of discipline, intelligent and purposeful organization made a difficult job easier.

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The third area of responsibility therefore is that of the community, its leadership, its organizations, its "power structure". This "community" can be, and frequently is, as cruel in its indifference to its police as it is to its minorities. Only constant vigilance on the part of citizens' groups, including our own, can keep the "community" on course with respect to its responsibilities. These citizens' groups are frequently referred to as "pressure groups". The term is one of opprobrium if applied to some other group with which we are not in sympathy - but all of us, even Police, at one time or another find ourselves in the position of being "pressure groups." It is in this way that the checks and balances of a free, democratic society operate. And - it is in this area that both of us, or all of us representing group interests, bear a double responsibility; the first to ourselves and our interests (in terms of compelling need) and the second, to the conscience and awareness of the larger community. If our society, or "community" if you will, is able to preserve its integrity, fulfill its guarantees of freedom for its citizens, maintain its strength and resiliency and build greater unity for the difficult days ahead, it will be only because there are enough of us concerned citizens who will be willing to inform, educate, challenge, prod, even shock that community into a sense of its responsibility. I view the community as representing three principal levels or states of mind, as we think in terms of issues, questions or problems confronting us (develop the plus, minus and ? ? idea) (with little relationship to "right or wrong"). Each one of us can find himself in one of these groups, in an examination of self with respect to the roles each will play.

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I am afraid I have rambled, have been obtuse in too many places, have tried to say too many things in the allotted time. If so, I am sorry. What I have hoped to convey is that a sense of responsibility is essential to any man who would be free, but that the measure of the effectiveness of that responsibility, to a considerable degree, is found in the role each of us plays.

I have presented the minority group world as Exhibit A in the police task of preserving law and order, first as evidence of society's neglect of its responsibilities, and secondly as the sternest challenge to police in their need to recognize human relations training and active community relations, as an essential part of professional preparation and action. I had hoped to give a factual but believable interpretation of the weight of responsibility resting upon the Police, upon minority group leadership and upon society as a whole. I should like to close with the thought that has been uppermost in my mind. Communication represents our greatest single need, as between police and minority groups; as between police and the community. This needs to be emphasized over and over again. Where communication has failed, then the darkness of suspicion and distrust prevails. An article appearing in the March 1962 Law and Order ^{5/} says in one sentence what I have tried to say in these many pages. Presented by two Texas university professors as the Policemen's Eleventh Commandment is this sharply defined responsibility:

"Thou Shalt Understand your fellowmen and shalt
help him understand you."

^{5/} LAW AND ORDER, Vol. 10 No. 3, March 1962 - as presented in the Proceedings of Texas A & M 5th Annual Police and Community Relations Institute, August, 1962

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